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A Matter of Humanity

Leaders of the so-called Congolese People's Republic—whose tattered remnant "rebel" forces are backed chiefly by the Chinese Communists—have been playing a cruel cat-and-mouse game with Dr. Paul Carlson, the young American medical missionary. On one day they say they accept "in principle" the idea of negotiating with our country to spare his life. But on the next they announce that he is to be executed forthwith as a "spy" employed by our Central Intelligence Agency. At the moment there is no way of knowing what fate has befallen him; he may be alive or he may be dead.

The one thing clear, however, is this: Dr. Carlson, far from being an espionage agent, has been healer of the lame and the halt, physically and spiritually, in the rebel-held Stanleyville area. As Secretary of State Rusk has put it, "He is a man of peace who has served

the Congolese people with dedication and faith for three and a half years, taking care of the sick and wounded, including those of rebel forces." In the circumstances, Mr. Rusk has not exaggerated in assailing the threat of execution as an "outrageous violation" of international law and an act of inhumanity against a humanitarian servant of both God and man.

Mr. Rusk has said some further fitting things. He has warned that the Congolese "rebel" leaders are "directly responsible" for the safety of Dr. Carlson and 60 additional Americans trapped in rebel-held areas. This applies, too, to the hundreds of other nationals, mostly Belgians, who are being held as hostages. Should harm befall these innocent and defenseless men, women and children, the guilty parties must be indicted and condemned before the entire world for their crimes against humanity.